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seemed that the others present agreed with him, the leader would give in and have the crier announce the revised decision."

On the march, the leader went at the head of his band and showed the way. When several bands were together, the leader of one would have decided where he intended to go, and, if the other bands had decided to go along with this one, they followed, but were free to break away at any time.

The band to which either the Keeper of the Flat Pipe or the Keeper of the Feathered Pipe belonged had a certain distinction as there was a tendency when the tribe split for each to have a considerable following.

According to tradition, as related by The Boy, the Gros Ventres had had in the fairly remote past a formally selected chief or leader of the whole tribe. It was said that he functioned when the whole tribe was together and that his decisions in important matters were made in consultation with the chief men, including the leaders of all the bands. There was no regular council and anyone present might express his opinion. Often the Keepers of the Sacred Pipes were present at such meetings called by the tribal chief, but if they were not present they were supposed to be kept advised.

The last regularly selected leader of the whole tribe was said to have been White Eagle, who held this position in the last decades of the eighteenth century. It was said further that White Eagle was preceded by White Shield, of whom there are many stories extant, and that White Shield was preceded by Elk Going Against The Wind. The Boy gave the following information regarding the "election" of White Eagle. The account was given to The Boy by his father, Lame Bull, who had it from Old Man Gopher, a cousin of Lame Bull's paternal grandfather. "The Gros Ventres had been badly decimated by smallpox and only about 30 lodges were left.[9] Old Man Gopher and his sister, both of them very young children at the time, were the only survivors of their family. The old men among the survivors of the tribe got together and proceeded to choose a chief. White Eagle was then a young man

[9] A reasonable chronological estimate would identify this as a tradition referring to the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1780. For historical data, see p. 9.

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to have been the key factor in the abandonment of the earlier methods of hunting buffalo. The situation of the Gros Ventres in regard to horses, which had apparently been so bad in approximately the first two decades of the 19th century, gradually improved, according to our informants, by natural increase of the few horses they had and by successful raiding of the enemy, especially for the fast buffalo horse. If Bradley's figures are correct, the Gros Ventres averaged five horses per family in 1830. According to our informants, by about 1850 they had "lots of horses," but we know that, even so, the number of horses fluctuated considerably after that date. Coming Daylight, for instance, remembered clearly several times prior to 1880 when the whole tribe was relatively poor in horses. During these periods people were forced to cache as much as possible so they wouldn't be too heavily burdened as they traveled about on foot. No doubt the same factors were operative in the Gros Ventre area as obtained in Blackfoot territory—severe winters and skin diseases among the horses.[1]

In any case, even in relatively prosperous times, seldom if ever did an individual possess great herds such as are described for the Kiowa. The Boy stated that his father, Lame Bull, who was an outstanding man, had a herd of about 60 horses. Coming Daylight explained: "Each family kept its own little bunch of horses. In early morning they would be taken out to pasture, usually by the older boys; around the middle of the day they would be watered and driven out again; in the evening they would be brought back and the more valuable ones, the swift buffalo horses, were always kept tied close by at night in case of raid by the enemy."

Such a family-owned herd would be differentiated and would ideally include pack horses, riding horses, and a few buffalo horses. The right of disposal over his own horses was, however, recognized for each individual man, woman and child. A man had the possibility of augmenting his own holdings directly by raiding the enemy. Because of the social recognition attendant upon successful raiding, as well as the economic necessity for controlling the means of production, the individual might actually devote in the course of a year more time and energy in pursuing this objective

[1] For an excellent discussion of the whole problem, see Ewers, 1943.

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342 were sewn together with sinew. The women selected the poles for the lodge, as well as for the travois, and were responsible for [484] erecting and taking down the lodge, for the arrangement of the interior, for the making of the travois, and for the packing and moving of impedimenta.

The foundation of three poles for the lodge was tied together and then raised as a unit. The other poles were arranged one by one, starting with those of the front. The cover of buffalo hides was tied to one pole, the "backbone," which was placed at the center-back, the cover then being drawn into place and fastened securely at the front, with small wooden pins usually made of cherry-tree wood. The ordinary Gros Ventre lodge stakes were shaped like a pin with a relatively small head. One informant, [184 177] however, stated that this form of stake often came loose where the cover became taut with the wind, and that she had found the forked type, first observed by her many years ago when visiting another tribe to the south, far more satisfactory.

342 Old lodge covers were saved and cut up to make a sort of lining 353 at the bottom of the lodge in winter, and the snow scraped away to make place for the lodge was piled up on the outside thereof for extra warmth. In summer the ground inside the lodge was covered with willows, sagebrush or rye grass. Decorated robes as windbreaks were sometimes suspended in the lodge behind the fancy backrests, which were made by the women from slender willow rods. The women gathered and peeled the rods, although the young men helped straighten them by pulling them through their teeth. A willow ring encircled the fireplace and a broom of buckbrush was always kept handy. Personal belongings were neatly disposed against the wall of the lodge and in front of these were placed the skins which served as bedding by night and as seats by day. The painted parfleshes were given prominence to lend colorful touches. Dishes, utensils, and stored food were suspended 412 from poles well off the floor.

415 Among the articles of household equipment may be mentioned knives, both of bone and of metal, kettles, horn spoons, fleshing tools, etc., and food containers of various sorts. For the latter, [237] the membrane protecting the heart of the buffalo, the paunch, the bladder, and the intestines of the buffalo, as well as those of the

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323 were made. Several days later he reported that he had asked around about how pots were made, and some old-timers said that they braided sinew to the shape of pot they wished; heated white flint and pulverized it, and mixed with the blue clay from around the neighborhood of Hays. This mixture was about 6 per cent pulverized flint. The clay and pulverized rock were mixed in a mortar, pasted over the woven sinew, and baked. "It gets so hard you can't break it." Tom Bad Road, now (1948) about 70 years old told Mary Ereaux that once when he was a young boy he saw an old, old woman making a pot of "sand." The pot had dried hard, but some young fellows used it as a target for throwing stones and broke it to pieces.

554 The place of honor was at the back of the lodge, opposite the door. Here at night slept the "man of the house" and his senior 513 wife, if he were a polygynist, the other wives and children on either 595 side. Coming Daylight described the arrangement of her father's lodge as it was before she was sent to live with her grandmother. Her father and one wife slept at the rear, the bedding placed parallel to the door; she and her mother had their bedding to the left as one entered the lodge, and perpendicular in regard to the opening, sleeping with their heads to the rear and feet to the door; while her father's unmarried brothers were similarly placed as she and her mother, but on the opposite side of the lodge.

484 When on the move, the women were in charge of the children and impedimenta and usually traveled in a group considerably be- 492 hind the men. Horses or dogs were used to draw the travois, and sometimes younger children or the sick and disabled were carried thereon. Mae Main remarked that her memory of riding on a horse travois was not a very pleasant one as she was often annoyed by the horse's tail brushing over her. Horses had to be broken to the travois and a horse owned by a man would never be so used. The horse can draw a far heavier load than a dog, but seemingly the Gros Ventres at no time had so many horses that the dog could be dispensed with altogether and the dog travois survived until very recently. At such times that horses for one reason or another were scarce, the people would be forced to cache a great deal of their surplus and to cut their lodges in half so the load would not be too great for a dog to draw.

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To cross a deep river such as the Missouri was quite an undertaking. When they reached the bank, they would spread out in family groups, while the men and women worked together to convert the lodges into round boats. Coming Daylight gave the following description. "The lodge cover was folded in half lengthwise over a rope of sufficient length that the ends protruded somewhat. Mud was then smeared as a layer between the two halves of the cover and on the outside of that half which would ultimately be in the water. The next step was to take the loose edges together, to form the rim of the boat by bunching up a considerable bit of the material and tying securely; leaving a free space, bunching up another bit of the material, leaving another free space, and repeating this operation at intervals, shaping the receptacle to the proper diameter by running a rope taut from 'tuft' to 'tuft'; then they packed in very carefully as much as the round boat would safely hold, and finally the portion of the rim which was formed by the fold—as distinct from the now 'tufted' free edges—was gathered into place by manipulating the ends of the rope which had been placed originally in the fold, the rope being now tied securely. A lead rope was attached to one 'tuft' at each side of the gathered portion of the rim. Two young men on horseback then dragged the boat into the water and took it across the river, dragging it safely up on the opposite bank."[16]

The boat was watertight and safe to transport any of their belongings, and even children or disabled adults. When the water transporting was finished the mud was washed off and the lodge cover spread on the ground to dry. This didn't take long and the lodge cover was soon as good as new.

The lodge poles had to be transported separately from the cover. The poles were cut when needed, and a hole was burned about four inches from the top of each. When the lodge was up, the free ends of the short strings of buckskin, run through these holes, fluttered in the breeze, making a fine decoration. The more practical purpose of the holes, however, was to allow a number of poles to be strung together for moving. For water transport not more

[16] Maximilian, who met the Gros Ventres on the Missouri in 1833, mentions, p. 73, their round boats made of buffalo skin, filled with articles for barter, "drawn by one swimmer and pushed by another."

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than six poles would be so tied together, a strong line running through the holes, leaving a loop to go about the horses' neck. Another line was tied around the six, about in the middle, to hold the poles together as the horse dragged them through the water. A mounted horse could draw two sets of six poles across the river at one time, one set on each side, but could not take all the poles for a lodge on a single trip. Meat packed in skin bags was often lashed to the poles and did not suffer in transit. Occasionally older children rode across the river on these poles, and some people paddled across straddling a single log.

The same goods which we have described as used by the Gros Ventre to meet their needs for food, clothing, shelter and transportation were likewise used to meet many other needs. Cloth and clothing, feathers, ornaments, and so forth, were used as religious sacrifices and offerings. Food was used as payment or part-payment for services of those who helped in production of economic goods, or of those who cured diseases, acted in ceremonial capacity of one kind or another, as well as in meeting certain specific kinship obligations. Lodges might be painted in accordance with a supernatural vision, and, with the associated songs, were transferrable to others as ritual objects. Horses were used as payments of various kinds,—in connection with the bride price, to ceremonial grandfathers, and so on. There was thus no medium of exchange within the group and no strict classification into producer's goods as contrasted with consumer's goods is possible.

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boy. He was so scared, he went insane and died in a few days," according to The Boy. 776 539

One story we gathered is about a very big rattlesnake, "as big as a person," big enough to eat a human being and leave only the skeleton. It had a large shining horn. Where it traveled it made a great bare trail like a modern road. It was horned, but was not of the water or earth monster "species." It was shot dead by a young man whom it had molested with murderous design while he was out in the hills crying and sleeping to obtain supernatural power.

In one story, the following, told by Singer, it is not clear whether there is question of a gigantic horned snake or of an earth monster proper.

"Near the head of Snake Butte there is a big cleft which runs all the way to the bottom. The cleft is said to have been made by lightning striking there. My husband Ax Handle [Assiniboine] was there and looked. He thought he saw something and looked again. It was a great big snake with a horn on the top of its head. He was scared and ran away." [823]

A somewhat conspicuous, though very human, role in Gros Ventre ritual and thought was played by the Last Child, idaːsθa, (itasé, "lastly," itasünna, "last;" -tha, "child" [Sifton]; apparently meaning "last child born in a family"). He was the little water snake, offspring of the water monster who figured in the story of He-who-starved-to-death (see No. 5 in Appendix). The Last Child had power in water, sharing to an undefined subordinate degree in the power of his father, the water monster, who was ruler under the water. He, alone or together with his father, was prayed to or given offerings, when the Gros Ventres had to cross rivers or lakes or when they swam or bathed in rivers or pools, lest they drown or be snatched down by the water monster. Early in World War II when a batch of Gros Ventre recruits was about to leave for overseas duty in the Pacific he was prayed to to protect them in crossing the ocean. In praying with a pipe, the Gros Ventres always held it up first to the Supreme Being, but lastly down to the Last Child. In food offerings, the Last Child was invited, last in order, to partake. In the sweat lodge he was mentioned 776 776 782 [484] 776

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had to point in the direction in which the camp was to move. This orientation could be discerned from a considerable distance. The people would already know that camp was to be broken that day and early in the morning would go out to see how the bundle hung and which direction the third leg of the tripod was pointing.

When the camp families were packed and all ready to start off, the Flat Pipe's own special horse was led up to the tripod where the bundle hung. The co-keeper, before taking hold of the bundle made the customary three passes at it spitting chewed peppermint at the bundle with each pass, lifted it off the tripod, turned around clockwise, made three motions with the bundle, stem-end forward, as if putting it on the saddle (note saddle of Flat Pipe in Plate 2A), and at the third actually put it there where it rested crosswise, held taut with thongs to both sides of the saddle and under the horse's belly. Then she mounted from the right side her own horse, and started off leading the horse that carried the Pipe bundle, the latter horse coming behind her own, not abreast.

Sometimes the co-keeper, *ad libertum*, would carry the bundle herself on her own back, putting it on her back before mounting her horse and carrying the bundle with the thong handle resting over her upper arm just below the bend of the shoulder and the bundle itself at her back. To help her mount so burdened they would lead her to a side hill. The Boy's mother, when co-keeper, at times on the march used to say that the bundle so carried felt heavy at the start, but after a while felt light. When the co-keeper so carried the bundle, leading the Pipe's own horse, she followed the keeper. Occasionally the Pipe bundle was carried on a travois, but we obtained no details on this point.

On the march, while scouts were not uncommonly sent out ahead to find the best route or watch for enemies, the co-keeper with the Pipe-bundle led the cavalcade itself. No one could go in front of her: if any one did, bad luck would befall him. If both the Flat and Feathered Pipes were with the caravan, the Flat Pipe was in the lead, next the Feathered Pipe, then the chief or chiefs, finally the body of the group. The keepers rode immediately behind the respective co-keepers, never before. If the caravan were on the way to one celebration or a Sacred Dance, the group giv-

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ing the Dance came right after the Pipe or Pipes. If there were no sacred pipe with the caravan, the chief or head man rode first in the line of march. 484 478

On the march, which was ordinarily at a slow pace, no one stopped to smoke or for other reason unless the co-keeper halted. When they stopped, usually about half-way, she would hang the bundle on the tripod, all by itself away from and well forward of the crowd in the direction of the trek. All stopped behind it; they did not surround it; it was always ahead of them in the direction they were heading. No one moved to re-start ahead until the co-keeper did so.

If the route of march necessitated crossing a big river, such as the Missouri River, the procedure in Coming Daylight's words, was as follows. "They put the Flat Pipe bundle in a bullboat. Of course there was no child in the bullboat. They chose two young men, popular and heroes, to lead that bullboat across. These two would be all painted red. They had robes rolled up and when they got midway across the river they put the robes in the water as offerings. As soon as they started across my grandmother up on the cliff at the river's edge would start cheering and singing the victory song. This song is a strong-heart song. When there was something hard to do they sang this song. They would say the names of the two young men and sing this song to encourage them. They all moved the bullboat into the water and different people would put into it various things to be thrown into the middle of the river. The keeper and co-keeper who owned the Pipe were not supposed to swim or bathe in water. Both could ride in this bullboat with the Pipe, but the woman always did. The two young men [on horseback apparently] held the robes [offering mentioned above] in one hand and pulled the bullboat with the other. The Pipe in the bullboat was the first of the caravan to cross the river. After all the people had gotten across the old women had a victory dance and sang for the crossing." [505] [782]

On arrival at the new camp site the co-keeper would hang the Pipe bundle on the tripod at a spot just to the north of where the keeper's lodge was to be erected. Then the new sage bed and sacred hearth were made, and the bundle brought into the lodge,

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with the rites previously described. On a day's journey it may be noted, the bundle would have been placed on the tripod in the open three times: before starting out, about half-way, and on arrival at the new camp.

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The killing of a pure white buffalo, a pure albino,—always a cow never a bull, according to Gros Ventre tradition,—was an extremely rare occurrence. The killer could keep it himself, give it to the Flat Pipe keeper, or offer it as a sacrifice. This sacrificial rite was last held when the Boy's father, Lame Bull was a young man, probably in the 1850's, and served as a calendrical date: "at the time the white buffalo skin was offered as a sacrifice." The Boy, our sole informant on this rite, could give only fragmentary data on it, gotten from his father who had witnessed only that one time in his life.

If the killer chose to offer the albino skin as a sacrifice, he had to vow, and then had formally to notify the keeper of the Flat Pipe. Carrying it he went clockwise round the camp circle on the inside and brought it to the keeper's lodge. The keeper painted
[302] the man's face with charcoal paint (not red), the ritual color for sacrifices, with a circular band around his face, on the forehead, the sides of the cheeks near the ears, and under the jawbones and chin, and with also a star on the bridge of his nose. The circle, Lame Bull told the Boy, represented the sundog; the star, the sun. A procession in which the keeper, co-keeper, Pipe child, ex-keepers, ex-co-keepers, the two attendants, and all the people took part started at the keeper's lodge and marched clockwise all around the camp circle, very slowly, with three stops (probably at the west, east and south) for prayer, till they reached the sweat-lodge near the keeper's lodge. The albino skin was given a touch of charcoal paint, as in other sacrifices, but The Boy did not know other details of the special rite used in preparing the skin, nor did he know who carried it in the procession. On arrival of the procession at the sweat lodge, the main body of the people went away, but the small group who were to sweat remained and went through the whole sweat-lodge rite at which the albino skin was hung up on the sweat-lodge pole and after which, in accord-

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song had also to be sung, apparently to the accompaniment of the drum.

Putting sweet pine needles on the sick person's head, blowing wild parsley on him, and smudging him as doctoring practices have been previously described. According to Singer, if some one were so sick that his life was despaired of, the keeper would take the Feathered Pipe [the bundle, probably] and lay it on him and pray over him, and the sick person would recover, and, she added, "it cured a lot of them." Doctoring power was regularly acquired by reason of acquiring the keepership.

The keeper and co-keeper painted their own faces every morning after breakfast, like the men, in two bands, but broader ones three or four fingers wide, one on the forehead near the hair line and the other from one jaw across the chin to the other jaw.

The Pipe bundle was smudged by the keeper every morning and evening with sweet pine needles. During Curly Head's keepership Cora Chandler and her children were kept busy collecting dried cow dung for the daily smudging ceremony. The keeper made it a practice to "talk" or pray often to the Pipe in his lodge. According to The Boy, the keeper was fearful lest otherwise he might make ritual mistakes, at which the Pipe would be angry. According to Al Chandler, the Pipe being jealous, the keeper "had to talk to it to let it know it was not forgotten or put away; he treated it just like a person."

Customary observances on the occasions of feasts or ordinary meals to guests in the keeper's lodge have been previously described.

When the keeper and the people were camped for any length of time in a given place, the Feathered Pipe bundle was ordinarily taken in the morning from its place of honor opposite the entrance inside the keeper's lodge, hung up outside over the entrance, and brought back inside at eventide.

When the camp was to be moved, the Feathered Pipe keeper, like the Flat Pipe keeper, had, it seems, a consultative voice in the decision and perhaps even veto power at times, although ordinarily the final decision was made by the head men. The decision once made, early in the morning when camp was to be broken, the Feathered Pipe bundle was hung out on its tripod back of the

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keeper's lodge, with two tripod legs close together and the third pointing in the direction of march, as a signal to the people.

On the march, the Pipe bundle was ordinarily packed on Pipe's own horse. Two stuffed parfleches were placed, one on either side of the saddle; blanket robes were thrown over them and the saddle; the bundle, with its covers, was then put thereon and securely lashed down with specially tied rawhide thongs.

On breaking camp, the two Pipe keepers with their Pipes might decide to stay together, or else to separate. "Most of the people [usually] hung around the Pipes." If the Pipe keepers decided to separate, some of the bands or other groups or families might choose to go with one Pipe, others with the other, others still with neither. "Both Pipes had certain bunches who followed them, and when the Pipes split certain ones went with each. Each band suited itself and followed the Pipe it liked best." This, for example, is what happened on the occasion when the Assiniboine captured the Flat Pipe.

If both Pipes stayed together, then according to The Boy, Turn Toes, and Takes the Bow, the Flat Pipe took the lead, the Feathered Pipe coming second in line. Garter Snake could not recall the order of precedence. We did not obtain further clarification of Al Chandler's statement: "The two keepers moved out first side by side and if the tribe was going to split, it was up to the people which Pipe they would follow." The statement may refer to those occasions when the Pipes were going to separate. On such occasions, all informants were fully agreed that the Flat Pipe and Feathered Pipe each came first in the line of march of its respective followers. The order on the march, for the Feathered as for the Flat Pipe was: the keeper in the lead, next to him the co-keeper leading the Pipe horse behind her, then the Pipe child alongside or just behind the horse. In this connection the original first co-keeper of the Feathered Pipe was called, in Garter Snake's version of the origin story, "Woman-takes-the-lead."

Other Sacred Pipes

In recent years the Gros Ventres have had only the Flat and Feathered Pipes, but earlier there were others. The Boy listed

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[782 511] praying and singing were done at other seasons of the year and how far as a more general custom by other fathers of families were points we did not clear up.

[264] Before eating food, at least in any more or less formal gathering, a portion of the food was offered up with prayer.

[224] Prayer rites and observances for good hunting were few and simple—as compared, for example, with the numerous and complicated ones practiced by the Algonquian-speaking tribes of the taiga. Abundance of food, which principally meant game food, was commonly prayed for. Two of the Sacred Dances, the Law Enforcers' and the Woman's, had as a purpose success in buffalo hunting. But beyond this, hunting entered little into ritual, and we may recall hunting was conspicuously absent from the power quest. We recorded no rites or observances whatever in connection with the gathering of berries, roots or other plant food.

● [484] It was customary on crossing rivers to pray to the Last Child for protection, and to throw into the water offerings, especially shells and eagle-tail feathers, for the Last Child, or the water monster, or both, with some words such as, "I give you this." Sometimes, too, some prayer and offering would be made by a person going to swim, or on other occasions of water hazard.

During or just before severe thunderstorms, various prayer and other procedures were resorted to, many of them directed to Bha'a, the storm being.

Seeking indirectly or asking directly the prayers of the aged, especially for long life, took several different forms, and played an important role in Gros Ventre life, as we have explained elsewhere.

There were many different ways of seeking the prayers of the aged. We recorded the following, which may or may not exhaust the list: crying before a lodge, offering a pipe, promising a sweat-lodge, "holy boiling," providing a feast, doing favors of various kinds.

782 888 "Holy boiling," to which we have not as yet referred, was an observance distinct both from the preceding ones and from feasting a group of aged people. It was intended primarily for some one person, man or woman, although others partook of the meal, and